

## INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Officer Candidate School (OCS) Option and Branching Process for Aviation Leaders

1. Purpose. To inform enlisted, warrant officer and civilian personnel of the OCS process as it relates to becoming an Aviation commissioned officer.

2. Points of Interest and Facts.

a. AR 350-51 governs the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School selection, branching and implementation processes. Personnel interested in the OCS program must read and follow the application directions in detail in order to be considered for OCS.

b. The primary document to be included in an OCS packet is the Application for Appointment, DA Form 61. Block 6 of this form allows applicants to list their branch preferences. Branches are assigned by needs of the Army, branch preference, educational background, prior military training and experience and whether prerequisite qualifications are clearly met. This is particularly important for personnel desiring to be branched into Aviation. The OCS Board will concurrently determine which applicants will become officer candidates and their branch of service.

(1) Aviation Warrant Officers (AWO) who wish to be commissioned aviators will ONLY list Aviation as their branch choice. AWO's are assured Aviation Branch because of the large investment the Army has already made in their aviation training and assignments. Their selection as aviators also does not require additional training at the schoolhouse, other than OBC, as would be the case for enlisted and civilian personnel.

(2) Enlisted personnel **must** ensure that they clearly demonstrate to the OCS Board that they meet all aviation prerequisites in order to be considered for Aviation Branch. These prerequisites include passing the Flight Aptitude Selection Test (FAST), and possessing a Class 2 Flight Physical that has been approved by Fort Rucker within the previous 18 months. The average score on the AFAST is 120, and the most common obstacle to passing the flight physical is visual acuity. Also, any required waivers (age, education, or disciplinary) must be granted before your packet is sent to the OCS Board.

(3) Civilian personnel fall under the same guidelines as enlisted personnel, unless they are prior service. Unfortunately, civilian applicants accessed by Recruiting Command are usually not informed of the particular requirements for receiving Aviation as their branch – specifically that the AFAST, Class 2 Flight Physical, and any other pertinent documents are required to be forwarded *with* their OCS application packet. Civilians are advised to utilize the Warrant Officer Flight Training (WOFT) program to open the door to Army Aviation, and then apply to OCS after their one year utilization tour.

c. Timing is important in the branching process, as well. Classes that graduate in the summer are much less likely to receive Aviation than during the winter and fall months. This is due to the large influx of ROTC and USMA graduates into the Aviation schoolhouse from June through August. The OCS Board simply has very limited training slots available at this time because the priority for school seats is given to the other commissioning sources. Of course, this does not apply to the Aviation Warrant Officer candidates.

d. Once your packet is certified as meeting the base requirements for aviation service, the Board members will look deeper into your packet for aviation service potential. Letters of Recommendation play an important role. These letters should be from employers, associates, college professors, coaches, and anyone else who can articulate your potential for aviation service and leadership. Letters should not be from relatives, regardless of their position. Obviously, they should not contain any derogatory information. Private pilot certifications are helpful and should be included in a packet, but will not guarantee an Aviation branch selection.

e. OCS Boards are conducted once a quarter.

3. Your installation and MACOM will have points of contact to guide you through the application process. You may also contact Aviation Proponency for general information regarding the OCS application process, COM (334) 255-1423/1430, DSN 558-1423/1430.

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